

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY**

**JAMOR J. DEMBY,**

**Plaintiff,**

**v.**

**PATRICK NOGAN, et al.,**

**Defendants.**

**Civil Action No. 23-21725 (SDW-LDW)**

**MEMORANDUM OPINION**

**IT APPEARING THAT:**

1. On or about October 30, 2023, Plaintiff Jamor J. Demby, a former prisoner in East Jersey State Prison in Rahway, New Jersey, filed a pro se civil rights complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. (ECF No. 1).

2. Plaintiff also filed an application to proceed *in forma pauperis* ("IFP") under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a). (ECF No. 1-1). Plaintiff's IFP application is properly completed and establishes his financial eligibility to proceed without payment of the filing fee. Therefore, Plaintiff's IFP application will be granted.

3. Because Plaintiff is granted *in forma pauperis* status, this Court is required to screen his complaint pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B), and *sua sponte* dismiss any claim that is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. "The legal standard for dismissing a complaint for failure to state a claim pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) is the same as that for dismissing a complaint pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6)." *Schreane v.*

*Seana*, 506 F. App'x 120, 122 (3d Cir. 2012) (citing *Allah v. Seiverling*, 229 F.3d 220, 223 (3d Cir. 2000)).

4. In deciding a motion to dismiss pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(b)(6), a district court is “required to accept as true all factual allegations in the complaint and draw all inferences in the facts alleged in the light most favorable to the [Plaintiff].” *Phillips v. Cnty. of Allegheny*, 515 F.3d 224, 228 (3d Cir. 2008). “[A] complaint attacked by a . . . motion to dismiss does not need detailed factual allegations.” *Bell Atlantic v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007). However, a plaintiff’s “obligation to provide the ‘grounds’ of his ‘entitle[ment] to relief’ requires more than labels and conclusions, and a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do.” *Id.* (citing *Papasan v. Allain*, 478 U.S. 265, 286 (1986)). A court is “not bound to accept as true a legal conclusion couched as a factual allegation.” *Papasan*, 478 U.S. at 286. Instead, assuming the factual allegations in the complaint are true, those “[f]actual allegations must be enough to raise a right to relief above the speculative level.” *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555.

5. “To survive a motion to dismiss, a complaint must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to ‘state a claim for relief that is plausible on its face.’” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (citing *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 570). “A claim has facial plausibility when the pleaded factual content allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for misconduct alleged.” *Id.* “Determining whether the allegations in a complaint are plausible is a context-specific task that requires the reviewing court to draw on its judicial experience and common sense.” *Id.* at 679. “[W]here the well-pleaded facts do not permit the court to infer more than the mere possibility of misconduct, the complaint has alleged—but it has not ‘show[n]’—that the pleader is entitled to relief.” *Id.* (citing Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2)). Moreover, while *pro se* pleadings are liberally construed, “*pro se* litigants still must allege

sufficient facts in their complaints to support a claim.” *Mala v. Crown Bay Marina, Inc.*, 704 F.3d 239, 245 (3d Cir. 2013) (citation omitted) (emphasis added).

6. The defendants to the complaint are Patrick Nogan, Administrator of East Jersey State Prison and New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety. (ECF No. 1.) Plaintiff alleges that, on August 22, 2022, he contracted COVID-19 while confined in East Jersey State Prison. He alleges that he contracted the virus based on the abdication of responsibilities and the customs, practices, policies and procedures of the defendants, in violation of the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments.

7. "To state a claim under § 1983, a plaintiff must allege the violation of a right secured by the Constitution and laws of the United States, and must show that the alleged deprivation was committed by a person acting under color of state law." *West v. Atkins*, 487 U.S. 42, 48 (1988) (citations omitted).

8. New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety is an arm of the State that his immune from suit for damages under the Eleventh Amendment. *Allen v. New Jersey State Police*, 974 F.3d 497, 506-07 (3d Cir. 2020). Plaintiff's claim that he contracted COVID-19 due to Defendant Patrick Nogan's abdication of his responsibilities or his customs, practices, policies and procedures is conclusory. First, "a failure to eliminate all risk [does not] establish that the [defendant] was deliberately indifferent to [detainees'] serious medical needs." *Hope v. Warden York Cnty. Prison*, 972 F.3d 310, 330 (3d Cir. 2020). Second,

to hold a supervisor liable because his policies or practices led to an Eighth Amendment violation, the plaintiff must identify a specific policy or practice that the supervisor failed to employ and show that: (1) the existing policy or practice created an unreasonable risk of the Eighth Amendment injury; (2) the supervisor was aware that the unreasonable risk was created; (3) the supervisor was indifferent to that risk; and (4) the injury resulted from the policy or practice.

*Beers-Capitol v. Whetzel*, 256 F.3d 120, 134 (3d Cir. 2001) (citing *Sample v. Diecks*, 885 F.2d 1099, 1118 (3d Cir. 1989)). Plaintiff failed to allege such facts.

9. In conclusion, this Court will grant Plaintiff's IFP application and dismiss his complaint without prejudice for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted. Plaintiff is granted leave to file an amended complaint.

An appropriate order follows.

Dated: November 13, 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Wigenton", written over a horizontal line.

Hon. Susan D. Wigenton,  
United States District Judge